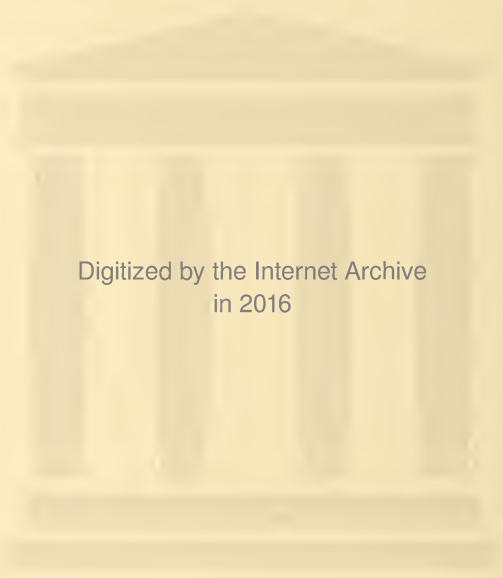


OCCASIONAL PAPERS
ON THE HISTORY OF
BOSTON COLLEGE

NINETEENTH CENTURY
BOSTON COLLEGE:
IRISH OR AMERICAN?



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In his generally impressive history of the American collegiate curriculum from Colonial times to the present, Williams College historian Frederick Rudolph remarks of nineteenth century Catholic colleges. "Their [Catholics'] colleges were mostly Irish colleges, along with some German colleges, before they were American colleges."¹ To be sure there were Catholic colleges whose students were almost all of Irish or German extraction and to that extent the institutions might be called Irish or German. But when they are called Irish or German before American, what does that imply? That such colleges were more Irish or German than American? Or that they were somehow Irish for a while and later American? It is not clear, but the statement led to the examination of one college in a city with a large Irish population, Boston College, to explore its 'Irishness' in the last century.

Scholars of nineteenth century Irish-Catholic history point to the Irish Catholic newspaper as the standard and vehicle of Irish spirit, so it might be reasonable in assessing the Irish tone or style of a college to compare its student paper, in this case the Boston College *Stylus*, with the local Catholic paper, the Boston *Pilot*. In his 1960 volume *To the Golden Door: The Story of the Irish in Ireland and America*, George Potter observes:

Next to the Church as a cultural influence was the Catholic Irish newspaper. The newspaper stood to the Catholic Irishman as school and college in one, his library, guide and companion. The impress of the Catholic Irish weekly upon the emigrants cannot be overemphasized Critics have dwelt upon the untoward influences of the Catholic Irish press; that it kept alive Irish sentiments, that it agitated Irish passions, that it flattered the Irishman instead of telling him the truth,

that its results were divisive and exclusivist inside the American community Of the numerous Catholic Irish journals in the United States, many of which had only a brief and fitful life, the best and most important was the *Boston Pilot* The highest tribute to the value of the *Pilot* is to say that no history of the Catholic Irish in the United States can be written without it. Its pages were in the marrow of the Catholic Irish.²

Already more than a half century old when the *Stylus* began publishing in 1883, the *Pilot* had served the immigrant Irish during the painful years at and after midcentury when they thronged to Boston's shores. Boston's Irish may have needed the *Pilot* more in 1850 than three decades later. By the 1880s the Irish were on their feet. They had an imposing new cathedral. They had their College. They had a seeming galaxy of new churches, not only in Boston but in the growing suburbs. And one of their own was Boston's mayor. One might expect their weekly newspaper to become more local or national, less Irish, in emphasis. But the *Pilot* of the 1880s and 1890s lived up to Potter's judgement: it left the impression that the United States was a suburb of Ireland rather than a different country.³

Front page articles dealt mostly with Ireland and Irish news or problems. A regular feature on page 3 was "Latest Irish News", giving rather gossipy items from or about each county of Ireland. A popular department right through the nineteenth century was "Information Wanted — Missing Friends" in which Irish all around the United States and Canada advertised for relatives or friends whom they wanted to contact.

The flavor and emphasis of the *Pilot* can be gleaned by examining the contents of page 1 of several issues. In the year of the birth of the *Stylus*, 1883, the November 17 *Pilot* carried the following headlines on its first page: "An American View of Ireland," "How English Papers Concoct Irish-American News," "James Stephens' Reminiscences in Dublin's Freeman's Journal," "Failure of St. Alban's (Vt.) Trust Co.," "Gov. Butler on His Defeat," "Michael Davitt's Address in England," "A sensible Reform in Time-Keeping," and "Ancient Irish Art." Five of the eight articles were about Ireland.

In 1890 the May 17 issue of the *Pilot* gave first page prominence to the following articles: "Ameri-

can Prelate at our Italian Pilgrimage," "The Tramp of an Army — Laborers of the World on the Move," "The Tories in Danger" (containing a prediction that the British government would have to sacrifice part of their Irish Land Purchase Bill), "Democrats Control R.I." (explaining that as soon as a constitutional provision was repealed limiting the vote to people owning real estate worth \$134, the Republicans of Rhode Island were defeated), "Immigrant Girls — Cardinal Gibbons speaks for them in N.Y." (the cardinal left no doubt about the immigrants he extolled, praising "the Irish maiden"), "The Celt in London — Irish Writers Ought to Take Irish Subjects," and "The Mouth of the Columbia — Rich Irishmen Married to Indian Women."

The first issue of the *Stylus* appeared in January, 1883. Boston College lads, whose families read on the front page of the January 13, 1883 issue of the *Pilot* articles about nine Irish-American judges, Mr. Parnell's great speech in Cork, and Michael Davitt's trip to England to speak on behalf of the Irish poor, presented their readers a poem of welcome to the *Stylus* by "the priest-poet of the South," Father Abram Ryan, an exposition of the need for a college paper, an essay on the importance of scientific study in a technological age, an invitation to alumni to subscribe to the *Stylus*, an account of the decorations and activities for Christmas at "the Immaculate," the College church, an essay on a two day summer visit to Salt Lake City in which the Mormons were described as "a sullen, cross, dissatisfied and unhappy set," news and odd items about College and class activities, several poems, an essay on reason, and a piece of fiction. Not a word about Ireland or the Irish, although that first *Stylus* carried on a back page an advertisement for *The Republic*, a newspaper proclaiming itself to be the leading Irish-American journal of the east. To support that contention the ad gave testimonials from other papers, such as "Takes an aggressive stand on Irish affairs" — *Boston Transcript*; "May it live to see Ireland a Republic" — *Boston Commercial Bulletin*; and "A vigorous and efficient advocate of Ireland's rights" — *Hartford Catholic*. The *Pilot* and *The Republic* were avowedly, aggressively Irish. No trace of their spirit or mission is found in the first issue or, as will be seen, in most later issues of the *Stylus*.

To give one more comparison, in the first year of the new century, the front page of the November 10 *Pilot* had stories with these headlines: "Three Yankees in Ireland," "British Atrocities in the Orange Free State," and "Anglo-Saxonism and Catholic Progress." A non-Irish item was headed "Cardinal Gibbons on the National Election," with the reassuring subheadline, "The Republic is Safe Whoever Wins." In the same month the *Stylus* offered its readers six poems on subjects such as autumn and evening, essays on the Jew of Malta, Macbeth, youthful types in Homer and Shakespeare, and on universal peace. There were the usual domestic tidbits about college societies, alumni, class activities, and exchanges. Again the contrast is complete: the *Pilot* preoccupied with Ireland and things Irish, the *Stylus* with no reference to Ireland or Irish themes.

In all of the issues of the *Stylus* between 1883 and 1900 there were only three articles on Irish topics. In the March, 1899, *Stylus* there appeared an essay on the Irish poet Lionel Johnson under the title, "An Irish Lyrist." Considering the many articles on British, French, American, and classical authors that the *Stylus* carried during those years, the single article on Johnson shows no absorption with Irish literature. The April 1900 *Stylus* reprinted an article from the *Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, "A Catholic University for Ireland," which called for a government-funded Catholic university similar to the British-supported Presbyterian universities of Scotland.

The most "Irish" of the three essays, and the one most like the *Pilot*, appeared in February, 1888, under the unpretentious title, "A Word." It is a reply to an article that had appeared in the *Boston Beacon*, which described itself as a weekly magazine of social progress and was part of Boston's journalistic scene from 1876 to 1904. The *Beacon* article opposed home rule for Ireland because, it stated, "We believe Home Rule in this connection would mean Rome rule." To this the *Stylus* writer riposted: "How smoothly flows the rhythm here! Home and Rome. But methinks 'tis the voice of a bigot, the phantasma of whose life is the mythical Rome that has passed back into the misty, legendary realms whence it was first conjured up by some *imaginative* Puritanic enemy of Rome." The *Stylus* article continued in the same

vein, reacting to the *Beacon's* mention of "the unlovely characteristics" of the Irish race and its statement that "the two greatest sources of trouble are the ignorance and thriftlessness of the majority of the people."

The *Stylus* author ended with an apology for having dwelt so long on the *Beacon's* anti-Irish article and his excuse is significant: "Our indignation at what we have no hesitation in styling its *un-Americanism* has perhaps led us beyond the limits of the reader's patient indulgence." The italics were the author's. True, he had accused the *Beacon* writer of religious and ethnic bigotry; but his final salvo was that the adversary was un-American. That charge of un-American reveals a ready faith in the fairness of American principles and laws, an ease and pride in being American. The young author of "A Word" was irate at slurs on the Irish, but he sounds as if he would have been equally indignant at an intimation that he was Irish before American.

Still, the contrast between the Irish emphasis of the *Pilot* and the near absence of Irish topics in the *Stylus* is striking. What accounted for the difference? It could be that the very dominance of the *Pilot* on the Boston and American Catholic scenes and the national standing of its eloquent editor, John Boyle O'Reilly, made the college students realize that an attempt to duplicate or compete with the *Pilot* in style or emphasis would be vain, and it seems likely that they would have been so advised by their Jesuit mentors. On the other hand there may have been some reluctance on the part of the youthful editors to concentrate on issues that preoccupied their elders.

Before considering the *Stylus* from another viewpoint, in the context of American collegiate journalism, it is pertinent to examine a second institution that preserved Irish spirit, the Irish militia company. The first in Boston was the Montgomery Guards, founded in 1837, a decade before the explosion of Irish immigration. Of the Montgomery Guards, George Potter wrote:

The company had been formed for the praiseworthy purpose of military service and association with the life of the city and state; it was an affirmative expression of a will by the Irish to be Americans. Pride of race and sentimental attachments to the motherland prompted a distinctively green uniform, on their caps

the emblem of the eagle bearing a harp symbolic of amalgamation, their motto: "Fostered under thy wing, we will die in thy defence." Each member wore a piece of lace in the form of a shamrock sprig. A deep psychological necessity urged the Catholic Irish to express membership in the American community in terms of their racial identity — a pattern consistent with emigrant peoples; but the means of fulfilment through this symbolism struck highly nationalistic America as unpatriotic and unsatisfactory hyphenation.⁴

Militia companies in towns and on campuses were part of the American scene throughout the nineteenth century. The Irish seized upon this American institution and made it their own. In *Boston's Immigrants* Oscar Handlin wrote:

Militia companies were friendly social organizations, less attractive for their martial exploits than for the small bounty, the opportunity to parade in uniform, and the dinner and speeches that followed target practice and parade. Though others [it is clear from a footnote that Handlin means other immigrant groups] joined American companies, the Irish formed their own. Their earliest, the Montgomery Guards, had disbanded in 1839 after a dispute, but the Columbian Artillery, the Bay State Artillery, and the Sarsfield Guards took its place by 1852. Dissolved by the governor in 1853 as a result of Know-Nothing agitation, they continued their activities in new skins. The Columbian Artillery became the Columbian Literary Association, while the Sarsfield Guards became the Sarsfield Union Association, and their balls, picnics, and lectures suffered no loss in popularity.⁵

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Columbian Artillery was reestablished, and Irish units were recruited around the country. A number of them bore distinctively Irish names. There were Montgomery Guards from Cincinnati and Detroit, Emmet Guards from Albany, the Jasper Greens of Savannah, and the Hibernia Greens of Pittsburgh.⁶ Sarsfield and Emmet, of course, were Irish military heroes, Patrick Sarsfield being the seventeenth century defender of Limerick and Robert Emmet the late eighteenth century romantic rebel. General Richard Montgomery was a Dubliner, a career officer

in the British army, who became a naturalized American and led American troops during the Revolutionary War in the capture of Montreal, only to be slain in the assault on Quebec.

In contrast to the social Irish military units and the volunteer Irish brigades with Hibernian names and emblems in the Civil War was Boston College's cadet company. It started during the presidency of Father Fulton and flourished in the years 1870-1884. It was called the Foster cadets, not after an Irish hero but after a New Hampshire Yankee, John Gray Foster,* a West Point graduate, who served with distinction in the Civil War and was converted to Catholicism during the North Carolina expedition of 1861. One of the early cadet officers, who wrote his reminiscences for the *Stylus* twenty-five years later, described the cadet uniforms as Civil War style, dark blue in color, with large brass buttons stamped with the College monogram down the front, and white duck gaiters over blue trousers. The officers wore crimson sashes under their sword belts.⁷ No green, no shamrocks, no harps.

But when we look not at Irish militia brigades but at cadet organizations on Catholic college campuses during the nineteenth century, we get a different perspective.⁸ None of the other Catholic colleges, many of which had largely Irish student bodies, had any Irish touch in their titles or uniforms. In fact most of the cadet units took the name of the college. Here are a few, with the date of the formation of the cadet organization: Georgetown College Military Cadets, 1836 (they were brightened by a red braid and a red sash); Spring Hill Lancers of Spring Hill College, 1843; the Mountain Cadets of Mount St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Md., 1836; St. Louis Cadets of St. Louis College, 1851; Santa Clara Cadets of Santa Clara College, 1856; Continental Cadets (seniors) and Washington Cadets (juniors) of Notre Dame, 1859; St. Xavier Cadets of Xavier University, Cincinnati, 1875; and St. John's Cadets of Fordham (with scarlet uniform), 1891.

*Foster, prominent enough to find a place in both the *Dictionary of American Biography* and the first *Catholic Encyclopedia*, served with the Army Corps of Engineers after the war and conducted extensive survey and construction operations along the New England coast. He published a well known treatise, "Submarine Blasting in Boston Harbor" and was in the Boston area when the College's student battalion was formed.

Harvard anticipated Notre Dame by having a military corps named after Washington as early as 1812. Later in the century, at the time Boston College's Foster Cadets flourished, an organization called the Harvard Rifles was formed in 1875. A random selection of other non-Catholic colleges reveals that Allegheny, Baylor, Brown, Cornell (Iowa), and Dartmouth Colleges had cadet groups carrying the college name. So Boston College seems to have done the unusual in naming its cadet corps after a person, and the fact the College honored John Gray Foster, a Civil War veteran and a Catholic, reflects both patriotism and Catholic pride.

To return for a moment to the *Pilot*, George Potter commented:

A reading of the *Pilot* in the pre-Civil War years underlines the wide gulf between cultured Boston and the Irish community. The Golden Age of New England letters coincided with the years of greatest Irish emigration. Nothing in the *Pilot* indicated that the great literary figures of the time exercised the slightest influence on the Boston Irish.⁹

Of course, Potter was speaking of the literary era that Van Wyck Brooks called the "flowering" of New England, whereas Boston College in the last decades of the century was in the season that Brooks termed New England's "Indian summer." Longfellow, one of the luminaries of New England's literary circle, died in 1882. Three years later the Class of Poetry at Boston College held a commemoration in Longfellow's honor. It was a formal symposium with an artistically printed program. The exercises consisted of essays and poems about the author and readings from his work. This rather touching tribute to Longfellow — Yankee, Brahmin, Harvard professor — of course manifested a familiarity with the poet and his fame, but also proved the absence of any parochial Irish or Catholic bias against him. The event might be seen simply as a small but significant example of acculturation and of pride in regional lights of whatever ethnic background. But perhaps there was more to it than that. In his book, *The New England College in the Age of the University*, George Peterson noted that the graduating class at Williams College during the

1880s, as one item in a general poll of class opinions, regularly named Longfellow* as the world's greatest poet.¹⁰ There is no record that the Boston College students' admiration for Longfellow went to such lengths, but it is perhaps more than coincidence that students at an 'Irish' college and a Yankee college shared similar enthusiasms at roughly the same time. One can speculate that for the Boston College students the primary reference group was not the local Irish community but the general collegiate population.

Lending some credence to such an hypothesis is the fact that from its inception a regular feature of the *Stylus* was "Exchanges," which acknowledged and commented on student papers received from other colleges. Not surprisingly, journals from Catholic colleges were listed: Georgetown, Holy Cross, Fordham, Notre Dame, Villanova, and Niagara. But there was also a good representation from private and public non-Catholic colleges: Dartmouth, Brown, Amherst, Wesleyan, Tufts, Northwestern, Minnesota, Illinois, and Virginia. Clearly the editors and readers of the *Stylus* did not have their intellectual horizons limited either to Suffolk County or to the Boston *Pilot*.

This speculation to the effect that their status as collegians caused Boston College students to be more like than unlike their peers elsewhere led to a comparison of the entire contents of the *Stylus* in the last two decades of the nineteenth century with the contents of student papers at Brown and Williams during the same period. The similarities of focus, concern, subject matter, and style are strong. The students at all three colleges showed a partiality for the essay in the style of Lamb, as seen from these titles: from Brown's *Brunonian*, "A Day Off," "Withered Leaves," "The Art of Conversation," "Dreams;" from the *Williams Literary Monthly*, "Jogging through Some Old Ruts," "Duck Shooting," "The Poplars in the Berkshires," "That Dress Suit;" and from the *Stylus*, "Day Dreaming," "A Lamp Post's Soliloquy," "Cycling under Difficulties," and "An Evening Stroll."

*One year Tennyson was ranked second and Shakespeare fourth.

The longer and more serious articles in all three journals tended to be scholastic and philosophical rather than political or social. This is seen in such titles from the *Brunonian* as "Pedagogy in Our Colleges," "Religious Tolerance in College," "Civilization and Selfishness," "The Bible in the College Curriculum," "An Evil of the Elective System;" from the *Williams Literary Monthly*, "The Christian Element in Plato," "Doubt and Belief," "The Psychology of Belief," "College Journalism;" from the *Stylus* "The Need of Religious Education," "The Moral Value of Education," "Catholicism and Science," "The Literary Study of the Bible," "Dr. McCosh on Electivism."

While the *Brunonian* carried almost no articles with strictly literary themes, the Boston College and Williams College papers featured pieces about major and some minor British and American authors and their works. The Boston College students showed two of their distinctive loyalties by articles about Catholic writers such as Cardinal Newman and New England Catholic poets and by dozens of articles on classical themes and authors.

The *Brunonian*, the *Stylus*, and a second Williams College paper, *The Williams Weekly*, carried many domestic features having to do with college activities, athletics, and life. All exhibited a certain moralism in editorial comments, as witness such headings as "Cramming for Exams," "Cribbing," "Student Decorum," and "Decline of College Spirit" in the *Brunonian*; "Chapel Etiquette" and "Ungentlemanly Acts on Campus" in *The Williams Weekly*; and "College Spirit," "Evils of Smoking," and "Copying Themes" in the *Stylus*. Baseball was the central athletic interest for the papers of all three colleges in the 1880s, while in all three football gained equal space and concern in the 1890s. The *Brunonian* carried such articles as "Nuisance at Ball Games," "Base-running," "The Double Umpire System," and "The Importance of Interest in Football." *The Williams Weekly* felt called upon to rebut the charge of giving too much space to baseball and had articles on the need for financial contributions from the students for both football and baseball. The *Stylus* called for a college song and a new cheer to help the athletic teams and at different times both urged support for the football team

and decried the baseball team's poor performance.

In keeping with the starting-point of this paper, mention may be made of an article in the *Brunonian* of 1896 by one Thomas Hamilton Murray entitled "The Irish Chapter in the History of Brown University" and of an 1890 report in *The Williams Weekly* of a debate between two Williams literary societies on the question "Resolved that the British Government should grant Home Rule to Ireland" in which the affirmative side was declared the winner.

The nineteenth century was an era of oratory. Public occasions called for a profusion of speakers. Commencement was the college's oratorical showcase, often featuring a Latin oration, and, besides the salutatory and valedictory, a philosophical oration, a classical oration, and six or seven other orations. Commencement programs of Brown and Williams show that in the late nineteenth century there were at least ten senior orators at Brown and as many as fourteen at Williams. Boston College was more restrained, or more humane, since it usually had four and never more than five student addresses. Commencement in the nineteenth century, as it had been since Colonial times, was a public exhibition, a display of student talent and college accomplishment. Hence the topics of Commencement orations offer significant insight into the values and concerns of both the colleges and their graduates. Once again, by this norm the Boston College seniors were more like than they were unlike their Brown and Williams counterparts. The following Commencement themes are representative. From Brown, "Belief and Character," "Science and Philosophy," "The Growth and Influence of Physical Science," "Law and Liberty," "A National University;" from Williams, "The Influence of Intellect on Character," "Science and Revelation," "Law, the Interpreter of Truth," "Christianity and Scientific Progress," "Moderation," "Social Inertia;" and from Boston College, "The Existence of God and the Belief of Nations," "Anarchy and the Synthetic Philosophy," "Shall the United States Found a National University?" "The Rights of Inferior Nations," "The Ethics of Competition," "The Church and Education."

The topics tended to be abstract and were frequently philosophical or religious. If a random

selection were made of thirty Commencement topics from each college without identifying the campus where the orations were delivered, one would be hard put to identify one list as Boston College's rather than Brown's or Williams'. What might complicate such a challenge is that in 1884 a Williams Commencement topic was "Justice for Ireland;" in 1886 and 1887 Brown audiences heard orations on "Ireland for the Irish," and "The Moderation of Daniel O'Connell;" while in 1895 a Williams senior spoke on "The Irishman and His Case," and the following year a Brown orator expounded on "The Patriotism of the Irish-American." During that period no Boston College senior spoke on an Irish theme.

So, while we started out prepared to explain and perhaps defend an Irish emphasis at Boston College, we end up wondering why, in an actively Irish community, Boston College was not more Irish. We have to ask whether there was, on the part of the College authorities or of the students, an attempt to tone down and mute Irish sentiments, interests, and themes. Had the Jesuits subscribed to Orestes Brownson's outrageous mid-century suggestion that the Irish cease being Irish as soon as possible and assimilate themselves to the Anglo-Americans? In the best, or worst, tradition of nativism, Yankee Brownson, a convert to Catholicism, wrote in *Brownson's Quarterly Review*:

The American nationality will never be Irish, German, French, Spanish, or Chinese; it is and will be a peculiar modification of the Anglo-Saxon, or, if you prefer, Anglo-Norman, maintaining its own essential character, however enriched by contributions from other sources. This is to be considered as settled and assured as their starting point by all immigrants from foreign countries. They should understand at the outset, if they would avoid unpleasant collision, that they must ultimately lose their own nationality and become assimilated in general character to the Anglo-American race.¹¹

Brownson had more particular advice for the Irish:

What the Irish should aim at is not to excite pity for the misfortunes of their country, or tears for the wrongs they have for so many ages endured. The restoration of a nation is hopeless when it can only boast a greatness that

has passed away, or chant, though never so sweet and musical, a wail of sorrow.¹²

The Anglo-American sage further admonished the Irish:

They must study to avoid, as far as possible, wounding the national sensibility, or adopting modes of action or expression likely to offend it. Let them not make their new home an arena for fighting the battles of the country they have left; let them organize no military companies composed exclusively of foreign-born citizens; let them publish no journals, and organize no associations for political purposes to be effected in foreign countries. These things give offence, and not unreasonably, to the national feeling.¹³

However naive Brownson was in thinking his condescending advice would be welcomed by the Irish, his sentiments undoubtedly expressed the thought of the dominant Protestant population of the Boston area. Could it be that Boston College was seeking to "avoid unpleasant collision" and was fostering assimilation with the native majority? The answer appears to be no. There are too many contrary indications to justify the assumption of a set policy at Boston College of disowning or deliberately down-playing the Irish heritage. For example, from the earliest days St. Patrick's day was a college holiday. Again, an account of a lecture at Boston College by an English Jesuit that appeared in the *Stylus* in 1883 expresses sympathies Brownson would not have approved. The lecturer was Father Richard Clarke, S.J., late Fellow of Oxford. His address took place in the College Hall, though the article did not specify whether he spoke to a student or to a more general audience. His subject was "My Visit to Ireland," and the *Stylus* editor commented:

The vivid and sympathetic story which he tells, under this caption, in a recent number of the "Month", is simply a record of actual facts and impressions gathered during a brief visit to the country. The harrowing details are much more moving than pen or tongue can describe. Yet, when such strong confirmation of the sad recital comes from an English witness of so high a character, there is hope for a larger acceptance of the facts in the case, and readier sympathies with them.¹⁴

Several humorous anecdotes in the *Stylus* reveal that the students were quite comfortable with their Irish identity. One, tongue in cheek, expostulated against the painting of a wooden building in the college yard a color which the writer perceived as British red. Another poked fun at a group of upperclassmen who were so enchanted by the Irish airs played by an Italian street musician on the eve of St. Patrick's feast that they forgot to offer the usual appreciative donation.

Rather than postulate a policy or tradition of muting Irish emphasis at Boston College in its early decades, the following factors seems sufficient to account for the kind of low-keyed 'Irishness' we have noted. The students were surrounded at home and in their neighborhoods by successful organizations and agencies such as Irish Clubs, the *Pilot*, and the rest of the Irish press, all of which vigorously and effectively promoted Irish causes, news, and themes. There was no need, nor little point, in college students duplicating the work of such organizations. It is also clear from the evidence that the Boston College students were quite conscious and proud of their Americanism, which would naturally lead to emphasis on topics of local and national interest. Finally, the students of Boston's Jesuit college are revealed as preoccupied with their life as college students, absorbed in their classical literary, philosophical and religious studies, and sharing the interests and preferences of their contemporaries at non-Catholic colleges.

It would be disingenuous to attribute student attitudes and interests in nineteenth century Boston College solely to a self-generated student culture. The Jesuits were close to students both in class (the typical teacher had the same students in three or four subjects for as many as fifteen hours a week) and in out-of-class activities. Whereas in the twentieth century the Jesuit assigned to supervise a debating or dramatic society was termed a 'moderator', which implied occasional tempering of student exuberance, in the nineteenth century the Jesuit assigned to guide the student editors of the *Stylus* was called the 'director', a word that suggests an active role in the setting of publication policy and tone.

Considering the relatively non-Irish tone of the early *Stylus*, one might wonder whether the Jesuit directors may have been of non-Irish

backgrounds and hence not particularly sympathetic to Irish emphasis. Between 1883 and 1900 the *Stylus*' Jesuit directors were: Michael Byrnes, Martin Hollahan, Willian Stanton, Patrick Mulry, Thomas Gasson, Patrick Cormican, and Edward O'Hara. Father Gasson was born in England. All the others were of Irish extraction. One must conclude that the predominantly Irish faculty approved or abetted the low key approach to Irish themes and emphasis that the nineteenth century Boston College students manifested.

While the evidence permits a variety of interpretations, one thing is clear: nineteenth century Boston College was not Irish before it was American.

NOTES

¹Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1977), p. 170.

²George Potter, *To the Golden Door: The Story of the Irish in Ireland and America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), pp. 598, 599, 603.

³Potter, p. 601.

⁴Potter, p. 312.

⁵Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants, 1790-1880* (New York: Atheneum, 1976), p. 157.

⁶Potter, p. 475.

⁷Rev. Patrick H. Callanan, "Reminiscences," *Boston College Stylus*, XI (November, 1897), pp. 454-5.

⁸Information concerning cadet activity at the colleges mentioned was obtained by correspondence with the institutions and, in a few cases, from institutional histories.

⁹Potter, p. 607.

¹⁰George E. Peterson, *The New England College in the Age of the University* (Amherst, Mass: Amherst College Press, 1964), p. 78.

¹¹Orestes Brownson, "A Few Words on Native Americanism," *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, II (July, 1854), pp. 336-7.

¹²Brownson, pp. 341-2.

¹³Brownson, p. 352.

¹⁴*Stylus*, II (December, 1883), p. 13.



